

Toxicology, Padappai, S. India to be transferred to National Collection.

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PUNTIUS CRESCENTUS, A NEW CYPRINID FISH FROM SOUTH INDIA WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE TAXONOMIC STATUS OF SOME RELATED SPECIES¹

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(With a text-figure)

Over the years the Western Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India, Pune has been conducting extensive faunistic surveys of different districts of the Western Ghats, both in Maharashtra and Karnataka. As a result, a very rich collection of fishes is available at this station. In the course of working out the unnamed material of fish from Karwar, we came across some specimens of Cyprinid genus *Puntius* which, on closer observation, proved to be new to science. The new species is described below.

Puntius crescentus sp. nov.
(Fig. 1)

Diagnosis: Carp minnow with a pair of

maxillary barbels, without serration on the last undivided dorsal ray; 7 scales in the transverse and 22-23 scales in the longitudinal rows. Lateral line incomplete, ending on or before 4th scale; a lateral black spot at the base of caudal fin; a horizontal dark line along the body and a crescentic black band on the dorsal fin.

Description: B iii; D iii + 8; P 14; V 9; A ii + 6; C 21; L. 1. 23; L. tr. 7.

Head length 3.2 (2.8 - 4.16), body depth 2.8 (2.6-3), predorsal length 1.92 (1.6-2.2), pectoral fin length 4.7 (4-7), ventral fin length 4.7 (3.5-6), all in standard length. Body depth 1.1 (1-1.5), snout length 3.3 (2.6-3.5), eye diameter 2.5 (2-3.5), interorbital width 2.1 (2-2.3), all in head length. Eye 0.7 (0.6- 1) in snout length and 1.1 (1-1.5) in interorbital width.

Body laterally compressed. Dorsal profile a little more convex than the ventral

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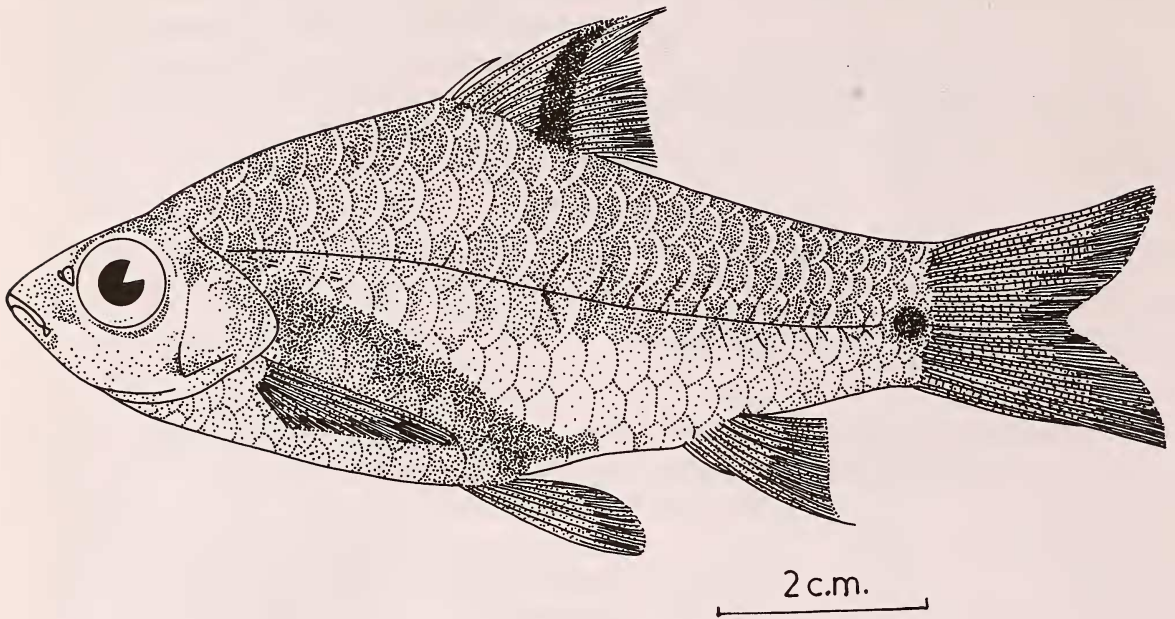


Fig. 1. *Puntius crescentus* sp. nov.

(profile). Head somewhat dorsoventrally compressed, pointed near the snout. Mouth terminal, somewhat upturned. Eyes prominent, situated towards anterior half of head. Dorsal origin slightly in advance of ventral, its first undivided ray almost indistinct, the third longest but weak and without serration on the posterior face. Pectoral origin just behind opercular margin, its rays not reaching the ventral; anal origin behind dorsal. Caudal deeply emarginate, its outer few rays in both the lobes slightly elongated. Outer rays of ventral elongated in some specimens. Scales cycloid, rounded and deciduous. One pair of maxillary barbels present. Lateral line incomplete, ceasing on or before 4th scale; 22-23 scales in longitudinal, and 7 scales in the transverse row. Eight to nine scales before dorsal fin.

Colour (in spirit): Dark brown pigments present all over body and head, but the dorsal

half of fish appears darker (than the ventral half) due to presence of heavy pigmentation dorsally. Each scale possesses a series of dark pigments along its outer margin, which, being quite distinct, gives it a characteristic appearance. Pectoral, ventral and anal fins appear colourless but some of their rays are pigmented and in the dorsal fin, present a vertical crescentic dark band between its base and tip. Laterally a round dark spot present at the base of caudal and a horizontal dark line, along the middle of body, from upper edge of operculum to caudal peduncle (ending before the dark spot at caudal base).

The name *P. crescentus* is given to this species since it possesses a very characteristic crescentic dark band on the dorsal fin.

Holotype: 29 mm. Kalinadi at Sunkeri c. 7 km east of Karwar, Karnataka (South India). Coll. G.M. Yazdani, December 25, 1975.

TABLE 1
DIFFERENT CHARACTERS IN THE RELATED SPECIES

Characters	<i>P. crescentus</i> sp. nov.	<i>P. vittatus</i> Day	<i>P. coorgensis</i> Jayaram	<i>P. muzaffarpurensis</i> Srivastava, Verma & Sharma
Barbels	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent
SL/HL	2.8-4.16	4.0-4.5	2.56-3.52	3.1-3.5
L.l.	Ceasing after 4th scale.	Ceasing after 5th scale.	7 or 8th	5th or 6th
Lateral line scales	22-23	20-22	22-25	22
Predorsal scales	8-9	8	6-7	8
Dorsal fin	Dorsal fin with a vertical crescentic dark band.	Dorsal fin with vertical black streak & a black tip with orange markings.	Dorsal fin colourless.	Dorsal fin with a dark grey vertical band.
Colour	A dark spot at caudal base and a horizontal dark line along middle of body.	A dark spot of caudal base.	Dark tinge at caudal base.	A prominent black spot present above the posterior base of anal fin.

Paratypes: 17 specimens with same details as above.

The type specimens will be deposited, in due course, in the National Collections of the Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta.

Relationship: This new species has been compared with related species like *Puntius muzaffarpurensis* Srivastava, Verma and Sharma, *P. coorgensis* Jayaram and *P. vittatus* Day in the table given above. It will be seen from the Table 1 that characters like the presence of barbels, lateral line scales and a prominent crescentic band on the dorsal fin easily distinguish *P. crescentus* sp. nov. from the other three species. *P. muzaffarpurensis*

Srivastava et al. is found in the Ganga river system while *P. coorgensis* and *P. vittatus* have been reported from South India (Mysore, Wynaad and Malabar).

Recently, Talwar and Jhingran (1991) have synonymised *P. muzaffarpurensis* and *P. coorgensis* with *P. vittatus*. However, on the basis of prominent differences among the three species (Table 1) we consider them to be valid species.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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